



600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-2891

September 24, 2009

Chairman Graham and Members of the Board:

I am pleased to present you with the Riders' Advisory Council's monthly report for August and September 2009.

Federal Appointments to the Board of Directors

On August 19, 2009, President Obama signed P.L. 110-432, legislation approving the WMATA Compact amendments creating four new Board seats, as appointed by the Administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA). As a voice of the riders of the Metro system, the R.A.C. wrote Acting Administrator Prouty, providing our thoughts and concerns regarding the breadth of experience and perspectives we would like to see in Federal Board members, as well as suggestions for creating accountable and transparent communication between these Board members and the riding public. The R.A.C. looks forward to working with the new members of the Metro Board once they are appointed. You should have all received a copy of the September 4 letter in an earlier distribution of materials to the Board, and a hard copy of the letter is attached to this report as well.

FY2011 Budget and Metro's Capital Planning Process

The Council is encouraged by the Board's recent discussions of Metro's FY2011 budget, and appreciates that the Board and Metro will reach out to the public and other stakeholders to get input in advance of the planned December release of the General Manager's proposed budget. Early dialogue can only help Metro and its jurisdictional partners develop strategies to address its operating needs for FY2011 and its multi-year capital needs. We also suggest that, as part of that public process, riders and the public are given specific choices and options with an understanding of likely consequences. This will allow the riding public to provide the Authority and the Board with meaningful feedback. The Council looks forward to working with Metro staff and the Board as part of the budget process to ensure riders' views are represented as part of the important discussions that will take place over the coming months.

The Council received a presentation at its September meeting concerning Metro's capital planning process. We look forward to receiving additional information about the FY2011-FY2020 Capital Improvement Plan throughout the fall as more specifics are developed. At the meeting, members expressed their desire for Metro to clearly communicate its capital needs to the public to make it aware of the challenges that the Authority faces in maintaining its infrastructure in a state of good repair. Council members were particularly interested in obtaining information about specific projects contributing to the \$11 billion in capital needs, Authority priorities within that \$11 billion list, distinction between capital expansion and capital maintenance, and how 2010 and 2011 capital funds split between expansion projects and maintenance projects. We also look forward to hearing specific information about how the Authority plans to use additional capital funding anticipated from the federal government and jurisdictional partners.

National Harbor Service (NH-1)

At our September meeting several members of the public provided comments regarding the recent reroute and rescheduling of the NH-1 Metrobus line. The changes were advertised as part of the public hearings conducted in April of this year and approved by the Board as part of Metro's FY2010 budget, and were implemented as of August 2, 2009. Riders providing public comment raised concerns about later start-of-service times on weekends, increased travel times resulting from the rerouting of buses from the Southern Avenue to the Branch Avenue Metrorail station, and lack of direct service to the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Council is working with Metro staff to get more background information concerning the development of this change and to see if any options exist to address the concerns raised, and plans to hold a meeting to focus on this issue.

Rider Communications

Members of the Council share the Board's concern with Metro's communications with its riders, especially its communications during planned service disruptions. Attached is the Council's recent letter sent to General Manager Catoe regarding this issue. We appreciate that Metro has provided notice of its planned closure of the Green and Yellow lines at L'Enfant Plaza over Columbus Day weekend. However, the Council believes Metro must continue communications regarding planned service disruptions its impact on Metro service and options for alternative service during such closures. This communication should be delivered to ensure that it reaches all potentially affected communities. Members of the Council plan to meet with Metro staff to discuss communications strategies and how to improve notice to riders concerning planned service disruptions. As always, the Council appreciates the opportunity to work with Metro staff to help revise the Authority's policies and practices to better serve Metro's riders.

R.A.C. Business

The Council devoted time in its August and September meetings to discussion of potential changes to our bylaws. Currently, we have submitted a list of proposed bylaw changes to Metro's Office of General Counsel. We are awaiting a response and comment on proposed language that would reflect these changes. The Council plans to have a final vote on these changes at its November meeting and submit them to the Board for approval in either November or December, such that they would take effect beginning in January 2010.

In addition, the Council also developed a list of potential agenda items to inform our remaining meetings for the year as well as meetings in future years. As always, we welcome your input into this list.

This concludes my monthly report. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

Diana Zinkl, JD, MCP
2009 Chair
Riders' Advisory Council



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Washington, DC 20001
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September 4, 2009

Acting Administrator Paul F. Prouty
General Services Administration
Office of the Administrator
1800 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20405

Dear Acting Administrator Prouty,

On August 19, 2009, President Obama signed amendments to the Compact of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) that create four new seats on the Board of WMATA, selected by the Administrator of the General Services Administration, as authorized in P.L 110-432. As you approach this benchmark decision in the history of WMATA and its relationship to the federal government, the WMATA Riders' Advisory Council (R.A.C.) asks that you please consider the interests of the riding public. The R.A.C. is a 21-member citizens' advisory group that serves as an institutionalized voice for riders inside WMATA. WMATA's Accessibility Advisory Committee, another citizens' advisory group focused on issues affecting individuals with disabilities, concurs with this letter.

WMATA provides basic transportation to residents of the National Capital Region. It is central to how many residents of the region live, work and play. It takes people of all income levels and backgrounds to and from work at all hours of the day and night, to religious services, medical appointments, day care and cultural events. For some transit dependent individuals, such as the elderly, individuals with disabilities, limited English proficient individuals, low income and very low income individuals, transit can be a lifeline to participation in society, providing them their only means of navigating their communities. It brings people home safely in all weather conditions, when they are alone, and when cars break down. It takes people home when they are tired or intoxicated, protecting not only the rider, but people they may never meet.

As Federal Board members, these new members will be in a position to represent the interests of all WMATA riders. We hope that these members will be committed to their role in working with our existing Board members in governing a transit system that serves over one million riders every day and proceed in a way that is both transparent and

accountable to the public. We also hope they will have confidence in the staff of the Authority in maintaining their position of governance, oversight, and public service.

A Commitment to WMATA and the National Capital Region

Our current Board members bring many strengths to their roles. Many are duly elected officials in their home jurisdictions with direct links to the individuals, communities, employers and private businesses and public service agencies in our area that rely on WMATA to access basic services and jobs, conduct business, and deliver critical social services. Other Board members are appointed based on their professional and personal experience that adds to the capacity of the Board to address the issues faced by WMATA and its riders.

We realize this is a position that comes with no compensation provided by WMATA. It is a substantial commitment and we hope that federal appointees appreciate the time and effort our current Board members devote to this responsibility and will be in a position to fully participate in Board activity.

Membership

Among the personal experiences of Federal Board members, we would suggest a preference for individuals with extensive experience using transit. Specifically, we request that all Federal Board members are regular WMATA riders, using WMATA services as their primary method of transportation for all purposes; at least two members, including one voting member, have a demonstrated commitment to the National Capitol Region through their years of residence or other community service to the area; and at least one member has experience using MetroAccess.

As you approach these appointments, we request that you designate specific individuals to these positions whose personal and professional experiences will help guide the Authority. While P.L. 110-432 and the Compact Amendments provided some specific guidance on selecting officials, GSA's guidance on appointing members to Federal Advisory Committees lists the following factors to consider in determining membership for GSA appointed bodies: (i) the mission; (ii) the geographic, ethnic, social, economic, or scientific impact of the group's recommendations; (iii) the types of specific perspectives required, for example, such as those of consumers, technical experts, the public at-large, academia, business, or other sectors; (iv) the need to obtain divergent points of view on the issues before the group; and (v) the relevance of State, local, or tribal governments to the development of the group's recommendations.

The WMATA Board provides guidance to the Authority on many internal and external issues. We ask that you consider a broad range of candidates with experience in human services, economic and community development, land use planning, infrastructure development, labor and employee management, financial management, oversight, and

safety, when appointing the Federal members. To take full advantage of the diversity and experience of the potential pool of Federal candidates, to the extent that appointees are current federal officials, we would suggest appointing no more than one official from any one Cabinet Department or Independent Agency.

Oversight and Accountability

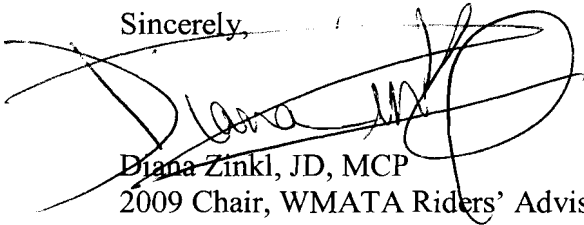
In addition to appointing members, decisions will need to be made in the Executive Branch regarding to whom the Federal members will report. Information about the Federal Board members will need to be available to the riding public as well. We would suggest establishing and maintaining a website that includes the names, titles and biographies of Federal Board members, contact information, and documentation of Board member activities. This website should be fully readable by accessibility software and strong consideration should be given to creating translations of documents and the website into foreign languages commonly spoken in the WMATA service area.

In addition, the Federal members should produced written annual reports made available to the riding public via the website and hard copies on file at WMATA headquarters and at least two metro accessible public libraries in each of the three member jurisdictions. We would ask that all materials should be in a format that is fully accessible to individuals with disabilities, and any translated versions should also be provided. In addition, we would suggest forwarding annual reports to the Legislative Branch as well, particularly the Oversight Committees of both Chambers of Congress, as well as to the personal offices of Senate and House Members representing the WMATA service area.

In closing, we would add that we view this new phase in the history of WMATA as an opportunity not only for WMATA to benefit from the experience and perspective of federal officials, but for the federal government to benefit from direct and continuous participation in the activity of a local government entity that directly serves the public. We believe this experience could promote a greater understanding of the challenges faced by local government and how the federal government can partner with state and local government to protect the interest of the public. We look forward to welcoming our new Board members and working with them on issues of interest to our riders.

Additional information about our Council can be found on our web page at http://www.wmata.com/about_metro/riders_advisory_council/. If you or your staff have an interest in discussing issues affecting the WMATA riders, the R.A.C. may be contacted through our staff person, John Pasek at 202 962 2891. In addition, please extend an invitation to our new Federal Board members once they are appointed to meet with us or attend any R.A.C. meetings, regularly scheduled the first Wednesday of every month from 6:30-8:30p at WMATA headquarters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diana Zinkl", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Diana Zinkl, JD, MCP
2009 Chair, WMATA Riders' Advisory Council

cc: U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer
Senator Barbara Mikulski
Senator Benjamin Cardin
Senator James Webb
Senator Mark Warner
Representative Frank Wolf
Representative James Moran
Representative Chris Van Hollen
Representative Donna Edwards
Representative Gerald Connolly
Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton
WMATA Board of Directors
John Catoe, General Manager, WMATA



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September 4, 2009

John Catoe, General Manager
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Catoe:

On September 1, 2009, *The Washington Post* reported that the Metro will shut down the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (herein referred to as National Airport), Pentagon City, and Crystal City stations on the Blue and Yellow Metrorail lines over Labor Day weekend from 9:30pm on Friday, September 4th until 5:00am on Tuesday, September 8th.

While the closure is necessary to ensure a high safety standard and rehabilitate deteriorating platforms and track switches, it will greatly affect travelers flying in and out of the only airport in the Washington metropolitan region with easy access to Metrorail. Metro offers area residents a reliable, low-price, and convenient means to reach their flight.

The Riders' Advisory Council knows that safety should always be the number one priority for any transit agency and understand the strong connection between preventive maintenance and the reliability and security of the Metrorail system. We also understand that there are often street closures and other circumstances that require rerouting Metrobus and MetroAccess services, most of which are out of Metro's direct control. At this time, the Council makes no negative judgment on the Authority's decision to schedule major maintenance on the Blue and Yellow lines over Labor Day weekend, and understands that long weekends are a rare opportunity to perform significant rehabilitative work.

That said, the Council has serious concerns about the notification process for the planned Labor Day weekend service disruption – concerns which can be extended to all future planned service disruptions, especially those resulting in station closures.

While cursory notification of the planned closures was provided in a Metro press release on August 5, 2009, widespread notification of the Blue and Yellow line closures was not made until the week immediately prior to Labor Day weekend. Many riders were caught off guard, and will now have to make alternate plans, or use additional time, to travel to or from National Airport or other stations on the Blue and Yellow lines.

While Metro's planned outreach efforts – including extra staff, handout flyers, website notification, and posters – are appreciated, they do little for riders who booked their travel (often at an increased price compared with other airports in our region) from National Airport months ago. For many, choosing to fly a more expensive flight out of National Airport for the sake of convenience became a major headache when they found out Tuesday that Metro would suspend service on the Blue and Yellow lines over the Labor Day weekend.

We are especially concerned that advance communication with riders was limited in a case when the closure directly affects a major travel hub on a weekend that traditionally is associated with increased levels of travel.

In order to help us better understand Metro's policy and practice on communications alerting riders to disruptions of this nature, and to assist the Council in its role in advising Metro, we request the you provide the Council with the following information:

- 1) Background information on Metro's decision to suspend service along the Yellow and Blue lines over Labor Day weekend;
- 2) Information outlining all communications and outreach efforts that were undertaken to alert riders to the closure.
- 3) A detailed account of existing Metro communication policy regarding planned service disruptions (for Metrobus, Metrorail, and MetroAccess) that adversely affect riders on dates which historical trends indicate may have expanded ridership at affected stations or stops;
- 4) Specific reasons, if any, which would prevent public notification of planned service disruptions at least forty-five days in advance.

The WMATA Riders' Advisory Council looks forward to receiving your written response to our questions by September 23, 2009 so that we may have ample time to review it before our regularly scheduled October meeting.

We thank you for your cooperation in helping us understand this situation, and request you direct all questions to the Council through John Pasek, Staff Liaison in the Office of the Board Secretary.

Respectfully,



Diana Zink, Chair
Riders' Advisory Council

cc: Members, WMATA Board of Directors